



## FAQ: Colorado River Management Plan Draft EIS

### **How does the DEIS address wilderness for the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park?**

The Colorado River Management Plan is primarily a visitor use management plan which specifies actions to preserve natural and cultural resources and the visitor experience. The DEIS does not re-examine the park's Wilderness Recommendation of 1993.

The Colorado River is included in the Grand Canyon National Park Wilderness Recommendation (1993 update) as potential wilderness due to the existing motorized raft use, defined by the Wilderness Act as a "nonconforming use." Section 4(d) (1) of the Wilderness Act allows for the non-conforming, established use of motors in designated wilderness. The continued use of motorboats does not preclude wilderness designation because this use is only a temporary or transient disturbance of wilderness values on the river and it does not permanently impact wilderness resources or permanently denigrate wilderness values.

### **How do you explain that the DEIS includes alternatives that retain motorized raft use when the NPS policy states that the agency must "seek to remove from potential wilderness the temporary, nonconforming conditions that preclude wilderness designation."**

The EIS evaluates the appropriate levels of motorized use on the river, including two no motors alternatives. The terms of the January 2002 settlement Grand Canyon Private Boaters Ass'n v. Alston required that the new CRMP will consider, among other things, "the impacts of motorized water craft, potential mitigation of those impacts, and a reasonable range of alternatives with respect to the current ratio of motorized craft to non-motorized craft, which alternative may include a no-motors alternative as well as one or more alternatives that contemplate the continued use of motors."

As stated above, the continued use of motorboats is permitted by the Wilderness Act and does not preclude wilderness designation because this use is only a temporary or transient disturbance of wilderness values on the river and it does not permanently impact wilderness resources or permanently denigrate wilderness values. Therefore, a revised CRMP will not compromise possible future wilderness designation, even if motorized use is permitted.

### **The 1989 CRMP included indicators and standards for natural and cultural resources and visitor experience. What are the indicators and standards for natural and cultural resources and visitor experiences in the Draft EIS?**

New indicators and standards will be developed for cultural and natural resources, as well as for visitor use and experience as part of the implementation strategy for the CRMP after the Final EIS has been approved and a Record of Decision signed. The development of management zones along the Colorado River corridor, as identified in the Draft EIS (pages 32 – 35), constitutes an initial stage of this process.

## **Why did you not consider the elimination of both commercial and noncommercial river use in the Draft EIS?**

Although the elimination of both commercial and noncommercial river use was recommended during public scoping, neither suggestion will be considered in the CRMP EIS because Grand Canyon National Park has determined that some level of commercial and noncommercial river operations are necessary and appropriate in accordance with the NPS Organic Act, the Grand Canyon National Park enabling legislation, and the park's General Management Plan (GMP).

Specifically, the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916 direct the NPS to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." (16 U.S.C.1). The Grand Canyon National Park Establishment Act (40 Stat. 1175) set aside Grand Canyon National Park "as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people." The 1995 GMP states the park will "provide a diverse range of quality visitor experiences, as appropriate, based on the resources and values of the Grand Canyon, compatible with the protection of those resources and values." (pg.7).

## **How does the Draft EIS address the allocation of use for educational, resource management, research, visitor protection and service trips?**

Currently, research and NPS trips are subject to a permitting and trip review process in accordance with park operating procedures. Educational, resource management and service trips will be subject to a process that includes, but is not limited to:

- Affiliation with an existing educational or service organization;
- Assistance with NPS-approved research or conservation projects;

Specific implementation details will be considered during the public comment period. The NPS recognizes the value of research, partnerships, resource stewardship and providing educational opportunities.

## **How will the weighted lottery be implemented?**

The weighted lottery is described in some detail on pages 98-102 of the DEIS. The NPS believes the weighted lottery will relieve at least some, if not many, of the problems of the waiting list system. The implementation details are essential to making everything work.

We welcome input on the implementation of the weighted lottery that would enable the NPS to create a system that will work well for its users.

## **How will the all-user registration system work?**

Many of the details of the all-user registration system have not yet been developed. One of its benefits would be to measure the number of people who want to go on the river within the next two years more directly by the NPS, rather than relying on other measures, or a wait list that appears to include many registrants who would not be able or willing to go within two years.

We welcome input on the implementation of the all-user registration system.